



February 26, 2015

To: Senator Danté Bartolomeo, Representative Roberta Willis and Members of the General Assembly Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

The Connecticut Center for a New Economy supports S.B. 398, An Act Assisting Students Accepted Into the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program With The Cost of College, and finds that it solves a number of problems that restrict economic growth in Connecticut.

The General Assembly holds education as a high ideal and promotes academic achievement for all Connecticut students. It is important, therefore, to make institutional financial aid and state financial aid for higher education available, on the basis of need, to all students matriculating to Connecticut public colleges and universities, without regard for immigration status. It is important also to create a state FAFSA-like form for documenting family income and need.

We must encourage all Connecticut students, at all levels of education to do their very best. Too many face roadblocks unrelated to their capacity to learn that can limit their achievement. We impede the effort they are making to prepare to contribute to Connecticut's economy. These roadblocks impair everyone's sense of fairness and hold our State back.

It is widely recognized that Connecticut needs talent and needs young people to stay. Those who enroll in our public colleges and universities are more likely to stay and form the basis of the new economy. Vote YES to pass S.B. 398 to send the message that we value the contributions of our young residents, that we value learning and we reward academic effort for everyone, no exceptions.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

The Connecticut Center for a New Economy (CCNE) promotes economic, social and racial justice for Connecticut's unemployed and working people.